

PACIFIC NORTHWEST CRAB INDUSTRY ADVISORY
COMMITTEE (PNCIAC)
8941 179th PL SW
Edmonds WA 98026

March 22, 2018

Mr. David Witherell
Executive Director
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
605 West 4th Avenue, Suite 306
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2252

Re: Agenda Item E, Staff Tasking

Request for NPFMC to task NMFS to implement an electronic catch reporting program for Bering Sea king and tanner crab fisheries

Dear Mr. Witherell:

At its recent meeting in Seattle on February 21st, the Pacific Northwest Crab Industry Advisory Committee (PNCIAC) adopted two motions, the first one to allow for partial deliveries of Bering Sea crabs and permitting boats to return to the fishing grounds (Agenda item B Reports). After consultation with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG), department staff noted some catch accounting challenges would need to be overcome to accommodate partial deliveries, but they did not identify any significant management concerns or barriers to implementation (conditional upon Council analysis of management and community related impacts). It was noted during the meeting that transitioning from paper to electronic fishery logbooks for crab similar to electronic groundfish logbooks may improve catch accounting and allow for easier implementation (PNCIAC Minutes, see Agenda Item B Reports). Thus, PNCIAC adopted a second motion recommending that work on a crab electronic logbook program be initiated simultaneous with development of the partial deliveries analysis. As PNCIAC now understands it, development of the electronic logbook program for all Bering Sea, king, tanner and snow crab fisheries will likely require an FMP federal regulatory action.

Problem statement:

Currently the crab industry is using a paper-based logbook catch reporting system, that supplements observer data and the ADFG fish ticket system. The logbook program is a federal FMP requirement, it is not a state requirement. It is widely recognized that the paper program is cumbersome---it is labor intensive, costly and lacks timeliness, as reports have to be hand delivered in port. Once submitted, recording the data requires hand entries, whereas with an electronic program reports can be electronically generated by crab boat captains from the fishing grounds. It eliminates the need for hand entries.

Electronic catch reporting will greatly improve timeliness, accuracy, and efficiency and it will be cost-effective.

Recommendation:

Based on the information available to PNCIAC regarding the implementation of an electronic logbook and catch reporting program, PNCIAC recommends the Council move forward with an analysis to develop the new program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lance Farr". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lance" and last name "Farr" clearly distinguishable.

Lance Farr
Chairman
Pacific Northwest Crab Industry Advisory Committee